



CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF



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8 SEPTEMBER 1966

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1. South Vietnam

The government has announced that some 5,300,000 persons have registered to vote on Sunday. This is about thirteen percent above the registration for last year's local elections.

Public interest in the election is increasing, but awareness of the issues involved is spotty and there is some cynicism about the outcome. Ky, the eternal optimist, says he would regard a turnout of between 60 and 70 percent of those registered as satisfactory.

Communist efforts to sabotage the polling are continuing and may become more dramatic in the next day or two. Local officials doubt, however, that these will appreciably reduce the turnout.

2. North Vietnam

Foreign merchant shipping to North Vietnam in August was at the lowest level ever recorded. Hanoi's dwindling supplies of export commodities were in part responsible for a decline in calls by Free World, Chinese, and East European vessels.

Soviet shipping to North Vietnam was well above average in August, however. Soviet vessels have been bringing in a wide variety of items to bolster the economy and the war effort.

3. Soviet Union

Moscow wants to buy a million tons of French wheat despite the best Soviet grain harvest in five years. The Russians have said they will keep importing until last year's agricultural reform takes hold--and, as far as we can see, that day is a good 15 years away.

4. Communist China

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5. Somali Republic

Twenty Somalis from northeastern Kenya have been sent by the Somali Republic to the Soviet Union for six months of guerrilla training. This is the first indication of direct Soviet involvement in the Somali-run guerrilla war in Kenya. Heretofore the guerrillas have all been trained by the regular Somali Army.

6. Syria

Tanks are in the streets of Damascus as the Syrian capital buttons up for another round of squabbles among Baathist leaders. All members of the hierarchy are equally ill disposed toward the US and whatever shifts are made in the leadership are not likely to change that attitude.

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7. Colombia

A dynamic new leader is emerging in Latin America.

President Carlos Lleras Restrepo, in office just over a month, is wielding his new broom with rare vigor. He has moved quickly to set the stage for a wide range of social reforms and tax measures to buttress his economic development goals. On the inter-American scene, he has already become a leading spokesman for economic cooperation in the hemisphere.

Lleras faces many potential pitfalls, not the least of them the deeply ingrained conservatism of many of his countrymen. He is now struggling with Congress in an attempt to free himself of a constitutional requirement that important legislation must be approved by a two-thirds vote.

The outcome of this fight will have an important effect on Lleras' ability to realize his programs. It remains to be seen, here as well as elsewhere, whether or not the vigor of his approach sets up equally strong resistance.

Lleras had an important success this week which will bolster his prestige at this politically strategic moment. He successfully faced down a threatened Communist-led student strike.

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